

- Ash, J. S. & Atkins, J. D. 2009. *Birds of Ethiopia and Eritrea*. London, UK: Christopher Helm.
- Ash, J. S. & Miskell, J. E. 1998. *Birds of Somalia*. Robertsbridge: Pica Press.
- Dowsett, R. J., Atkinson, P. W. & Caddick, J. A. 2013. Checklist of the birds of Madagascar. www.africanbirdclub.org (accessed 17 December 2013).
- van Gils, J. & Wiersma, P. 1996. Family Scolopacidae (sandpipers, snipes and phalaropes). In del Hoyo, J., Elliott, A. & Sargatal, J. (eds.) 1996. *Handbook of the Birds of the World*. Vol. 3. Barcelona: Lynx Edicions.
- Hockey, P. A. R., Dean, W. R. J. & Ryan, P. G. (eds.) 2005. *Roberts—Birds of Southern Africa*. Seventh edn. Cape Town: Trustees of the John Voelcker Bird Book Fund.
- Safford, R. J. & Hawkins, A. F. A. (eds.) 2013. *The Birds of Africa*. Vol. 8. London, UK: Christopher Helm.
- Stevenson, T. & Fanshawe, J. 2002. *Field Guide to the Birds of East Africa*. London, UK: T. & A. D. Poyser.
- Rockjumper Birding Tours*, PO Box 13972, Cascades, 3202, South Africa. E-mail: guides@rockjumperbirding.com
- Received 17 May 2013; revision accepted 23 December 2013.

First record of Audouin's Gull *Ichthyaeetus audouinii* for Ghana

Aidan G. Kelly^a, Richard H. Coombes^b, Dermot O'Mahony^c and Brian Porter^d

Première observation du Goéland d'Audouin *Ichthyaeetus audouinii* au Ghana. Un Goéland d'Audouin *Ichthyaeetus audouinii* de premier hiver a été photographié à Muni Lagoon, à l'ouest de Winneba, Ghana, le 13 Janvier 2014. C'est la première donnée de cette espèce au sud de la Sénégalie.

On 13 January 2014, at c.17.00 hrs, at the southern end of Muni Lagoon, west of Winneba, Ghana, together with our local guide Kalu Afasi of Malimbe Tours, we were scanning the wetland, part of the Muni-Pomadze Ramsar site, with telescopes. AGK noted a medium-to large-sized gull with a large flock of Royal *Thalasseus maximus* and Sandwich Terns *T. sandvicensis* c.400–500 m away. We concluded that it was a first-winter (second calendar-year) Audouin's Gull *Ichthyaeetus audouinii*. Given that Borrow & Demey (2010) stated that the only similar-sized gull known to occur in Ghana was Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus*, it was clear that we needed to obtain closer views and, if possible, photographic documentation. The bird eventually took flight with some of the terns and began flying around the lagoon. It occasionally came a little closer to us enabling AGK & RHC to take photographs, of which two are reproduced here (Figs. 1–2). However, as we had to return to Accra, we then had to leave the site.

Description

Medium-sized gull, with a distinctly long, pear-shaped head and a relatively long drooping bill, giving the bird a 'snouty' appearance. The bill was greyish with a dark tip, further adding to the long-bodied appearance. Very obvious were the longish legs, which appeared dark blackish grey. The pale grey mantle and relatively small size immediately eliminated Lesser Black-backed Gull, which is the only regularly occurring large gull in Ghana. In flight the bird appeared relatively long- and narrow-winged compared to Lesser Black-backed Gull. At times it recalled a very large Mediterranean Gull *Ichthyaeetus melanocephalus* in appearance and structure. Head and breast whitish with brown mottling on the ear-coverts and upper breast, extending to the belly. In flight the upperparts were quite contrasting due to an overall mid-grey mantle, lesser and marginal wing-coverts, although these tracts were still heavily peppered with brown juvenile feathers. Primaries, primary-coverts, secondaries and most of the greater coverts were dark uniform brownish,



Figures 1–2. First-winter Audouin's Gull *Ichthyiaetus audouinii*, Muni Lagoon, west of Winneba, Ghana, 13 January 2014 (Aidan G. Kelly)

Goéland d'Audouin *Ichthyiaetus audouinii* de premier hiver, Muni Lagoon, près de Winneba, Ghana, 13 janvier 2014 (Aidan G. Kelly)

contrasting strongly with the greyish mantle and lesser coverts. The bird had a very obvious dark tail band contrasting strongly with the clean white rump and uppertail-coverts. The underwings were quite dark and heavily mottled.

We were reasonably confident of our identification, but this being such a significant record, AGK sent some of the photographs to K. Mullarney, who commented as follows: "I fully concur with AGK *et al.*'s identification of the Muni Lagoon gull as a second calendar-year Audouin's Gull, in a transition plumage that is typical of first-winter birds at this time of year. With no other gulls alongside for comparison it is perhaps not so easy to gauge the bird's size as it might be otherwise, but the distinctive head and bill, noted by the observers as reminiscent of an oversized first-year Mediterranean Gull, are highly characteristic of immature Audouin's. The strong contrast in the underwing pattern, with prominent pale greater covert band against solidly dark secondaries, and the mostly dark uppertail pattern contrasting with an essentially unmarked white rump are also indicative of Audouin's. In one or two of the photographs it is possible to make out the two-tone pattern of the uppertail,

the basal half / two-thirds of the outer webs being a distinctly lighter shade than the broad terminal band, the uniformity being broken by one or two white inner webs revealed when the tail is spread. In this respect the tail pattern of first-year Audouin's is more similar to first-year Ring-billed Gull *Larus delawarensis* or Laughing Gull *Leucophaeus atricilla* than to other large gulls. The smooth or slightly mottled brownish-grey wash on the chest and flanks and unmarked white belly, vent and undertail-coverts is not seen in any of the larger gulls with which first-year Audouin's could be confused. While essentially in juvenile plumage, the Muni Lagoon Audouin's has replaced most of its mantle, scapulars and inner wing-coverts with adult-type light grey feathers. This corresponds with the more rapid acquisition of an adult-like appearance in Audouin's than in most of the other large gulls."

Audouin's Gull breeds locally around the Mediterranean Sea and is classified as Near Threatened (BirdLife International 2014). Its global population has increased from <1,000 pairs in 1966 to >20,000 pairs in 2000 (Olsen & Larsson 2004). This is thought to be due to the availability of effectively protected breeding

areas since the 1980s, and also to the increase of discarded fish from trawlers, particularly around the Ebro Delta (Gutiérrez & Guinart 2008, BirdLife International 2014). In winter the species is more widespread around the Mediterranean Basin and also winters commonly in north-west Africa, with 2% of the population wintering in Senegambia (Olsen & Larsson 2004). The record reported here appears to be the first south of The Gambia (Olsen & Larsson 2004; R. J. Dowsett *in litt.* 2014).

Acknowledgements

We thank Killian Mullarney for commenting on our photographs and this note.

References

BirdLife International. 2014. Species factsheet: *Larus audouinii*. www.birdlife.org/datazone (accessed May 2014)

Borrow, N. & Demey, R. 2010. *Birds of Ghana*. London, UK: Christopher Helm.

Gutiérrez, R. & Guinart, E. 2008. The Ebro Delta Audouin's Gull colony and vagrancy potential to northwest Europe. *Br. Birds* 101: 443–447.

Olsen, K. M. & Larsson, H. 2004. *Gulls of Europe, Asia and North America*. London, UK: Christopher Helm.

^a *Physiology Dept., Trinity Biomedical Sciences Institute, Trinity College Dublin, 152–160 Pearse Street, Dublin 2, Republic of Ireland. E-mail: agkelly@tcd.ie*

^b *67 Delgany Park, Killincarrig, Greystones, Co Wicklow, Republic of Ireland.*

^c *12 Sonesta, Texas Lane, Malahide, Co. Dublin, Republic of Ireland.*

^d *4 Kent Terrace, Barnhill Road, Dalkey, Co. Dublin, Republic of Ireland.*

Received 18 May 2014; revision accepted 18 June 2014.

First record of Ortolan Bunting *Emberiza hortulana* for southern Africa, in Namibia

Paul F. Donald

Première observation du Bruant ortolan *Emberiza hortulana* en Afrique australe. Un Bruant ortolan *Emberiza hortulana* de premier hiver, probablement une femelle, a été photographié dans la NamibRand Nature Reserve, Namibie centrale, le 13 novembre 2013. C'est la première observation pour l'Afrique australe, faite à environ 2.500 km au sud de la donnée précédente la plus méridionale.

On 13 November 2013 at 09.20 hrs, an Ortolan Bunting *Emberiza hortulana* alighted on the verandah of the NamibRand Family Hideout in NamibRand Nature Reserve, central Namibia (25°17'13.2"S 16°04'04.8"E). It was present for c.10 seconds in the shade of the low wall surrounding the verandah, during which time I secured two photographs (Figs. 1–2), before it took off, giving a single mellow *chew* call in flight. It appeared to land in the short dry grass just beyond the property's low boundary wall, c.10 m away, but I was unable to relocate it that day or the next. It may have been attracted by food I had put out for Sociable Weavers *Philetairus socius* and Scaly-feathered Finches *Sporopipes squamifrons*,

but was not seen to associate with these and was some metres from where they were feeding.

Identification

Although I was unable to take field notes of the bird's plumage during its very brief appearance, the photographs clearly show a number of distinctive features. Most striking are the prominent and distinctly yellowish submoustachial stripe and throat, contrasting with the blackish malar stripe, the numerous sharply demarcated blackish streaks on the breast and flanks, the broad pale tips to the lesser and greater covers forming two prominent white wingbars, the whitish eyering and the conical pinkish bill. The heavily